



# Brownfields Showcase Community Lowell, MA

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

*Brownfields are abandoned, idled or underused industrial and commercial properties where expansion or redevelopment is complicated by real or perceived contamination. In May 1997, Vice President Gore announced a Brownfields National Partnership to bring together the resources of more than 15 federal agencies to address local cleanup and reuse issues in a more coordinated manner. This multi-agency partnership has pledged support to 16 "Brownfields Showcase Communities"—models demonstrating the benefits of collaborative activity on brownfields. The designated Brownfields Showcase Communities are distributed across the country and vary by size, resources, and community type. A wide range of support will be leveraged, depending on the particular needs of each Showcase Community.*

## BACKGROUND

The Brownfields National Partnership has selected the City of Lowell as a Brownfields Showcase Community. Like many old, industrial cities, Lowell has almost no vacant land available for development. Though the market for commercial office and manufacturing space in Lowell continues to improve, most of the inquiries for industrial space cannot be satisfied because of limited supply. Returning the city's brownfields properties to productive use is critical to Lowell's industrial development and job creation efforts.

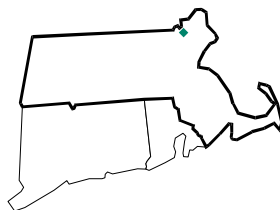
With a poverty rate of 18%, Lowell has 58% fewer manufacturing jobs than it did ten years ago. The city has recently achieved great success in redeveloping its old mill properties, ash dumps, and other disposal sites into new facilities that create jobs for local residents. The City identified 16-17 priority brownfields sites for assessment and testing, and attracted several large, experienced developers to redesign and market several of these properties.

Lowell has developed creative approaches to attracting investors for brownfields cleanup and redevelopment, including use of the Lowell Development and Finance Corporation (a consortium of local stakeholder banks) and tax increment financing. Community members, private businesses, and federal, state, and local agencies all play an integral part in the planning and implementation of city-based redevelopment projects.

## CURRENT ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Since the inception of Lowell's brownfields program in September 1996, the city has leveraged more than \$100 million in public and private investment. Highlights of Lowell's brownfields redevelopment program include:

### Community Profile



Lowell, Massachusetts

With almost no vacant land available for development, Lowell has targeted 16-17 brownfields sites. Lowell's redevelopment efforts have leveraged more than \$100 million in funding. One brownfields property is now home to a \$30 million sports arena and a \$12 million baseball stadium.

- Completing an inventory of 52 vacant or underutilized industrial properties within the city, and identifying sites with the greatest redevelopment potential to create a list of 16-17 priority brownfields properties;

- Development of a \$30 million sports arena and a \$12 million professional baseball stadium on the former

Lawrence Mills site, which has a 170-year history of industrial use;

- Supporting an \$8 million bond to initiate the Lawrence Mills redevelopment project, and raising \$1.6 million in private donations. This site could now accommodate as many as 2,450 new jobs;
- Attracting developers who have invested more than \$10 million into the 400,000 square-foot Wannalancit Mills project, and \$36 million into the 700,000 square-foot Boott Mills project; and
- Leveraging \$9 million in funding from the U.S. Department of Transportation for a Riverwalk Project that will connect Lowell's National Historic Park, the nation's first urban national park, by a walkway to the University of Massachusetts and the two new sports facilities.

On average, for every \$1 of public funding, Lowell has leveraged \$12 of private investment.

## SHOWCASE COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES AND PLANNED ACTIVITIES

Lowell plans to use the Showcase Communities project to continue the substantial success of its brownfields program. The city has eleven well defined goals for development and growth, and has made progress on each. These goals are: conducting public awareness strategies to educate the public on the benefits of living and working in Lowell; identifying the city's economic base, and evaluating strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities; developing economic development strategies for the Economic Opportunity Areas (EOAs) in the city; establishing mechanisms for implementing the

Division of Planning and Development's (DPD) financing programs; implementing marketing strategies for business retention and recruitment; developing a business retention program that will help the DPD evaluate the city's industry base; working with the Lowell National Historical Park to support historic preservation; developing a procedure for a streamlined permitting assistance process; working with the federally-designated Enterprise Community to open a Business Assistance Center to aid new or expanding businesses; implementing the strategies outlined in the University of Massachusetts at Lowell report on the city's industrial base; and continuing the work of the EPA Brownfields Pilot program.

### Contacts

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For more information on the Brownfields Showcase Communities,  
visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:

<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/showcase.htm>